

Hamilton Field, Post Office

(Facility No. 430)

5th Street between Escolta and Hangar Avenues

Novato

Marin County

California

HABS No. CA-2398-U

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HAMILTON FIELD

Post Office
(Facility No. 430)

HABS
CAL
21-NOVA,
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HABS No. CA-2398-U

Location: Hamilton Army Air Field
Novato, Marin County, California
Post Office
Facility No. 430 (5th Street between Escolta and Hangar Avenues)

U.S.G.S.: Novato, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1954 (revised 1980)
Petaluma Point, CA. Quadrangle (7.5' series), 1959 (revised 1980)
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; A: 542100/4213620; B: 544720/4212220;
C: 542760/4210650; D: 541040/4212600

Significance:

The post office building was added to the list of base service facilities in 1941. Building 430 is considered significant for its association with Air Force history in northern California, and with World War II actions in the Pacific Theater.

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) for a comprehensive Statement of Significance and individual report HABS No. CA-2398-A for a condensed Statement of Significance.

Description:

The base postal facility is a one-story L-shaped wood frame building supported on concrete piers. The main building measures 25 by 87 feet, and the front wing (added in 1942) is 30 by 60 feet. It has a low-pitched wood truss gable roof clad with composition shingles. Galvanized metal ventilation shafts are located along the roof ridge line. Siding is horizontal board covered with asbestos shingles. The perimeter foundation is concrete. The subflooring is wood, covered with linoleum or eight-inch-square asphalt tiles. The primary entrance has a partially enclosed entry with a shed roof. Fenestration is six-over six-light wood sash double hung windows flanking the primary entrance and along the side elevations. There are 12 windows on the southwest side, two on the northeast facade, and three on each side of the wing. Doors are four-light over one to three recessed panels.

The interior of the main building consists of a bank of small wood mailboxes and metal mail bins and a counter with work space behind. A small room and long corridor complete the post office appearance of the main room. The mail room has wood panel walls and an acoustical tile ceiling. Lighting is through exposed conduits and fixtures are mounted on the ceiling and suspended by chains or rods. They have metal canopies and metal hoods and are lit by exposed single incandescent bulbs.

Two bathrooms are located at the corner of the main building and wing junction. The men's bathroom has a "Crane Saxonet" ceramic flush valve toilet and a "Standard" urinal, both enclosed in wood stalls. Two enamelled cast iron sinks are mounted on the wall. The women's bathroom has one wall-mounted sink and a flush valve toilet, both made by Standard.

The wing was used as a sorting and storage room and still has route maps and delivery schedules mounted on the walls. Lighting, walls and ceilings are similar to the main building. Heating and cooling is through exposed ducts. The unstable nature of the temporary frame building wing is demonstrated by the presence of thick cables with turn bolts that extend the entire length of the wing, holding the building together.

Historical Context:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

The main building was completed in August 1941 during a time of massive build up in anticipation of World War II. It was built for a total cost of \$7,639.41 and was slated for use as a post office. In response to the population explosion on base once the United States entered the war, a wing was added in 1942 to increase the distributional capacity of the post office. The post office was built on the original base parade grounds, along with many other frame buildings constructed as infill during the war. It remained in use as the base post office until the mid-1970s. It is currently part of a base excess property sale.

Sources:

See narrative for Hamilton Field (HABS No. CA-2398) and Section B in report HABS No. CA-2398-F.

The line drawn sketches were drafted on site in 1994 by Keith Syda, scanned into a computer and drawn by Christopher MacDonald in 1995, and corrected and finalized by Claire Warshaw in 1996 (all PAR Environmental Services, Inc. staff).

Project Information:

Hamilton Army Air Field is owned by various federal entities including the Department of the Navy, Department of the Army, United States Coast Guard, and General Services

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Administration (GSA). The Army/GSA parcels are being excessed and sold to private developers. The Navy property is included in Base Closure and Realignment actions.

As part of the Army's undertaking, it has been determined in consultation with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) that the excess sale will have an affect on properties at the air field, and that these properties are components of a district that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on consultation with the OHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was entered into by the interested parties in March 1994. The agreement stipulated that prior to excess sale the Army must contact the HABS/HAER division at the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, San Francisco, California, to determine the appropriate level and kind of recordation for the subject properties. The MOA further stipulated that copies of the documentation be made available to the OHP and appropriate local archives designated by the OHP. This recordation has been prepared in order to meet those stipulations.

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Date prepared: July 1995

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